

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

STEPHEN KING THE STAND



MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
1 of 5

No Man's Land

AGUIRRE-SACASA

PERKINS

MARTIN

STEPHEN KING THE STAND

Creative Director & Executive Director: STEPHEN KING

Script: ROBERTO AGUIRRE-SACASA

Art: MIKE PERKINS

Color Art: LAURA MARTIN

Lettering: VC'S RUS WOOTON

Cover: TOMM COKER WITH LAURA MARTIN

Production: IRENE Y. LEE

Assistant Editor: CHARLIE BECKERMAN

Consulting Editors: BILL ROSEMAN

Senior Editor: RALPH MACCHIO

Vice President of Creative: TOM MARVELLI

Senior Vice President of Publishing Sales: DAVID GABRIEL

Senior Vice President of Strategic Development: RUWAN JAYATILLEKE

Editor in Chief: JOE QUESADA

Publisher: DAN BUCKLEY

**Special Thanks to CHUCK VERRILL, MARSHA DEFILIPPO, BRIAN STARK, JIM NAUSEDAS,
JIM MCCANN, ARUNE SINGH, LAUREN SANKOVITCH and JEFF SUTER.**

**For more information on THE STAND comics, visit: MARVEL.COM/COMICS/THE_STAND
To find MARVEL COMICS at a local comic and hobby shop, go to www.comicshoplocator.com
or call 1-888-COMICBOOK.**

THE STAND: NO MAN'S LAND No. 1, April 2011. Published Monthly by MARVEL WORLDWIDE, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, L.L.C. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020. © 2011 Stephen King. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Stephen King. Published by arrangement with The Doubleday Broadway Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc. This comic series is produced under license from The Doubleday Broadway Publishing Group and Stephen King. Marvel and its logos are TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. \$3.99 per copy in the U.S. (GST #R127032652) in the direct market; Canadian Agreement #4066537. Printed in Canada. PLAIN, V.P. Office of The President, Marvel Worldwide, Inc. and V.P. & CMO Marvel Characters S.V. DAN BUCKLEY, Chief Executive Officer and Publisher - Print, Animation & Digital Media; JIM SKOZLOWSKI, Chief Operating Officer; DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, SVP of Business Affairs & Talent Management; MICHAEL PASQUALE, SVP of Brand Planning & Communications; JIM CHENY, VP of Operations & Logistics; DAN LARV, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GARRIE, Director of Publishing & Editorial Operations; SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager; ALEX MORALEE, Publishing Operations Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Ron Stern, VP of Business Development, at ronstern@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-271-9156. Manufactured between 5/15/2011 and 5/16/2011 by IMPRIMERIES TRANSCONTINENTAL S.P.A.C., HAUSVILLE, QUEBEC, CANADA.

PREVIOUSLY IN THE STAND

Two months ago, something happened at Project Blue in California. Within weeks, a flu-like virus—"Captain Trips"—swept through the world, killing off 99% of the population. Now, it's up to the survivors to piece together a new life in a world that has moved on.

The survivors have split into two factions—dark and light. There are those who have heeded the call of Randall Flagg, also known as the Dark Man or the Walkin' Dude, and followed him to Las Vegas. There, he rules with absolute authority, and those who disobey his laws are executed—by crucifixion. Among his disciples are Lloyd Henreid, a former thief who nearly died of starvation when he was imprisoned during the final throes of Captain Trips, and was saved by Flagg. Another is Trashcan Man, or Trashy, a pyromaniac from Illinois who followed Flagg's call across the country, through the desert, and nearly died in the process.

Those who have followed the light flock to the summons of Mother Abigail, who has led her people to Boulder, Colorado. There, a new democracy has been established, and at its head are the seven members of the Free Zone Committee: Stu Redman and his lover, the pregnant Frances Goldsmith, as well as Glen Bateman, Larry Underwood, Sue Stern, the deaf-mute Nick Andros, and Ralph Brentner. The seven of them have re-ratified the Constitution and have begun the process of rebuilding their society.

But they have another task—to counter the oncoming attacks from Las Vegas. Little is known about what the Dark Man is planning, just that he is planning something. The committee decides to send three spies west to investigate: the 70-year-old Judge Farris, the scrappy Dayna Jurgens, and the mentally retarded Tom Cullen.

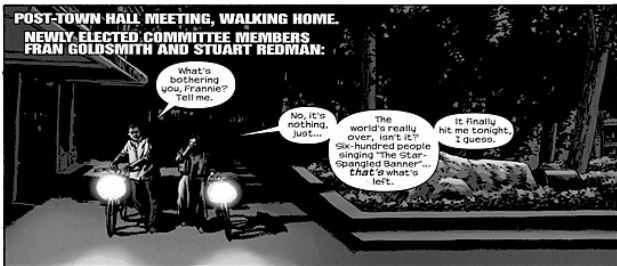
But the biggest blow comes to the committee just before they have their first public Zone meetings: Mother Abigail disappears in the middle of the night, leaving only a note: "I will be with you again soon if it is God's will." Leaderless and afraid, it is difficult to see how the citizens of the Boulder Free Zone will survive...

For more info, check out the character summaries at the end of this book.



POST-TOWN HALL MEETING, WALKING HOME.

NEWLY ELECTED COMMITTEE MEMBERS
FRAN GOLDSMITH AND STUART REDMAN:



What's
bothering
you, Frannie?
Tell me.

No, it's
nothing,
just...

The
world's really
over, isn't it?
Six-hundred people
singing "The Star-
Spangled Banner"...
that's what's
left.

It finally
hit me tonight,
I guess.



In my diary, I
had a section called
"Things to Remember,"
so the baby would
know...all the things
he never will.

I should have
called them "Things
That Are Gone."



It got everybody
the same way, singing
that song. Lots of
people will be crying
themselves to sleep
tonight, believe
it.

I don't see
how you can grieve
for a whole country,
but I guess
you can...

What do
you remember
best? What's
the *one*
thing?



It's crazy, I've
never told anyone,
but the truth is...I've
been thinking about
this very *memory*
the last couple
of weeks...

"About ten years ago, I was pumping gas at Bill Hapscomb's, working the graveyard shift, and one night this big old Pontiac pulls in..."

"Windows down, Hank Williams blasting from the tape player..."



Can I help you?

High test.

"Yes, sir," I said, but I just stood there and **stared** at him, Frannie. Because he looked incredibly, *eerily* familiar..."

Don't I know you? Ain't you from up around Corbett or...maybe Maxin?



No, but I passed through Corbett once, when I was a kid.

It seems like I've passed through just about every place in America.

"I filled up his car then, all the time thinking about him and his face..."

"And all at once, I *knew*. And I damn near pissed myself because the man behind the wheel of that Pontiac was supposed to be dead."



Keep the change.

Th-thanks.

I...I *think* I placed you, friend. Only thing is... you're supposed to be dead.



"He laughed this weird, *chilly* laugh."

Don't believe everything you read, man.

Say, you like Hank Williams? He's one of the best, in my opinion. I *loooooove* roadhouse music...



Well, you take care.

Maybe I'll see you again.



"But Fran, I wished right there and then that I would never see him again..."

"He had the eyes of a man who had been looking into the dark for a long time..."

"I think if I ever see that man Flagg, his eyes might look a little like that."



Stuart,
who are you talking about?



You remember the Poore? Crazy as it sounds, even though he was supposed to have died in France, that man was Jim Morrison, I'm sure of it.



**POST-MEETING,
LARRY AND LUCY'S.**

NADINE CROSS:

Can I talk
to you? It has
to be now.

Now...
or never.

For Nadine, Lucy Swan didn't exist. Her eyes were fixed only on Larry, the strangest, most beautiful eyes he'd ever seen...

Did you bring
your dog collar
and muzzle for
him, Nadine?

I...I'll be
right in, Lucy.
Ten minutes,
go on.

Ten minutes,
ten years...

She's come
to get you, I'm
dismissed.

*A door slam later, it was
just the two of them.*

*Larry couldn't help but think:
She makes Lucy look like a
used car on a scalper's lot.*

Let's walk down
to the corner and
back. Would you do
that much for me,
at least?

I better
stay in sight.
You picked
a hell of a
time--

*She dropped to her knees,
suddenly, plaintively--*

Please,
Larry! Just to
the corner!

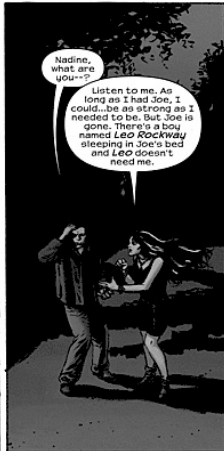
Nadine!
What--what
are you
doing?

Get up!
GET--THE
HELL--
UP--

He pulled her to her feet, roughly, and they walked west, towards the mountains.

Two or three nights before, Larry had dreamed there were hideous trolls in those mountains, guarding the passes, waiting for the time of the dark man...

A soft breeze meandered down the street with them...



He did have the terrible sense, though, that if he let it go with Lucy and went with Nadine, they might as well sink out of Boulder tonight. It would be the Old Larry triumphant.

I...I have to go home. I'm sorry, Nadine, you'll have to work it out on your own.



Make love to me, Larry--

I can *feel* you want to--

And that will be the end of it--

I'll be *safe*--



Larry had no idea how he found the willpower, but he did:

Whatever you want from me, you could have had it! You could have had it last week! Or the week before! When I *wanted* you to have it!



That was too soon--



And now it's too late, Nadine.



Larry *hated* the brutal sound of his voice, but how was he *supposed* to sound?



She was turning away from him...

All right.
Goodbye,
Larry.

...and, in that moment, she
was more than Nadine.



She was the oral
hygienist back in
Brooklyn.

You ain't
no nice
guy!



She was Rita Blakemoor.

Don't leave
me, Larry. I'll
be good.



Worst of all, she
was his mother.

There's
something
missing in
you.



Then Nadine was gone, melted into the
darkness, and the wind picked up, and
Larry swore he could hear the sound
of bootheels...

...dirty bootheels
clocking their way into
the grave of the west.

LATER.

After leaving Larry's, Nadine stopped by her house to pick up a few items; then she was racing on her Vespa, the night wind stinging her face...

"What's happening to me?" she whispered to the dark.



Larry had scorned her, she thought, And didn't they say that hell hath no fury...?

A scorned woman might well traffic with the devil... or his henchmen...

(And meanwhile, the Vespa chugged up dark Flagstaff Mountain, going west...)



When all the choices have been taken away, what do you do? You choose what's left. You choose whatever dark adventure was meant for you.

(An hour later, Nadine reached Sunrise Amphitheater.)



You let Larry have his stupid little twist of tail with her single-syllable vocabulary and her movie-magazine mind. You go beyond them. You let them have their meetings.

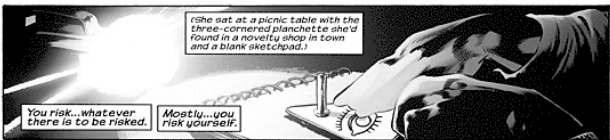
They were concerned with getting the power back on. Her lover-to-be was concerned with the world.



(She sat at a picnic table with the three-cornered planchette she'd found in a novelty shop in town and a blank sketchpad.)

You risk...whatever there is to be risked.

Mostly...you risk yourself.



Hands on the planchette, Nadine felt she was at a border crossing, a no-man's-land between two spheres of influence: Flagg in the West, the old woman in the East...

The magic was flowing both ways, making a concoction that belonged neither to God nor Satan, but was wholly pagan...



She remembered the last time she'd played at automatic writing, in college, with her dorm-mates.

There had been much giggling the night their fearless leader, Rachel, commanded:

Spirits, do you have a message for our sister and Brownie-in-good-standing, Nadine Cross?



More giggles, then nothing for a few moments.

Nadine was about to move the damn thing herself--



--when the planchette suddenly jerked under their fingers.

Did you do that, Janie?

No.

Marla?

Uh-uh.

Nadine?

No, and it felt--

(Under their fingers, the planchette started to thrum madly...)





All right,
the joke is
over.

Stop it,
you guys. Stop
it or you'll be
sorry.

dire, Nadine, Nadine, How I love Nadine to be my love
my Nadine to be my Queen if you are pure for me
if you are clean for me if you are dead for me

I can't
take my fingers
off it...

It feels
so...

The planchette
began to write,
smooth, powerful,
and fast:



It stopped writing,
but kept thrumming.
Nadine hoped--oh,
how she hoped--
that it was over...

YOU ARE DEAD WITH THE REST OF
THEM YOU ARE IN THE DEADBOOK WITH
THE REST OF THE ROTTEN WITH THE
REST OF THEM UNLESS UNLESS UNLESS



...but then it began again,
racing across the page:

THE WORLD THE WORLD
IS DEAD AND WE WE
WE ARE IN THE HOUSE OF
THE DEAD NADINE

The letters
screamed
at Nadine:



The planchette
snapped in two--

--and there was an instant of
shocked, immobile silence.



Later, when Janie and Maria
had retreated to their room
in weeping hysterics:



Who was it,
Nadine?

I don't
know,
Rachel.

You don't
recognize the
handwriting?

No...

From that night twelve years ago
until now, she had never touched
another planchette, but...

...well, the time had sloughed
around again, hadn't it?

And who would be driving tonight?
And where would the driver take her?



Sitting on the border, she
felt him pressing heavy on
her, dragging her down like
weights tied to the feet
of a dead woman.

Flagg's dark presence...

Tell me.

Beneath Nadine's fingers, the
planchette began to move...



**AUGUST 19th, STU AND FRAN'S.
PERMANENT FREE ZONE
COMMITTEE MEETING:**

The newly elected members met to discuss old business and new: Sending their scouts out to the west, which would have to happen soon--

(They would send the three spies separately, and without knowledge of each other's existence, in case Flagg discovered their purpose and tried to torture any one of them for information.)

Starting a Census Committee to keep track of Boulder's ever-swelling population. To document the people arriving, and the people leaving. (Possibly defecting to the west.)

Beefing up the Burial Committee, so that all the corpses would be cleared out of Boulder by the time wet season arrived.

And the bombshell Nick brought to the table, read aloud by Ralph: "To see if the Free Zone will create a Department of Law and Order with Stu Redman as its head."

AFTER THE MEETING, CLEANING UP:

Fran,
about this
marshal
thing--

I don't want
to talk about it, Stu.
You were elected, six
votes to one.
Congratulations.

Somebody has
to help keep the
peace, honey. And
Nick was right, I
am the logical
choice.

Screw logic.
What about me
and the baby?
Do you see no
logic in us,
Stu?



Frannie...you want him brought into a world where things are safe for him--I want that, too. You and the baby are the two main reasons I said okay.



Everything's going to be fine...

No, I don't really think it is.



And that was that.

And while washing the dishes, a queer certainty stole over Fran, as numbing as some creeping anesthesia: That they would finish by wading in blood...



That the same way that warmth can only come from a burning, love always comes due in blood...



For the first time in weeks, Fran found herself thinking of her dream: the dark man with his grin...and his twisted coat hanger...

AUGUST 20th.

In addition to hunting for Mother Abigail, Harold was on the Burial Committee, under the guidance of Chad Norris, who had been an undertaker in his previous life.

*Harold had volunteered because... who gets to be **best** liked in any community? Why, the man who does the dirtiest job, of course, and does it with a smile.*



They spent the day emptying the Church of Latter Day Saints on lower Table Mesa Drive. Over seventy dead; the stink was enormous.

"It's going to be like moving and burying cordwood," Chad had promised them, "Nothing but cordwood."



Once the church had been cleared, they drove the bodies to a burial site ten miles southwest of Boulder, in an area that had once been strip-mined for coal.



Watching the bodies tumble out in a grotesque human rain, Harold felt an instant pity, a feeling so deep it was an ache.

Cordwood... That's all that's left. Just cordwood...



**AT THE END OF THE DAY.
CHAD NORRIS:**

No football
cheers, but you all
did damn good. We
put away close to
a thousand...units
today.

If you feel
like you can do it
again, I'll see you
tomorrow morning
here, at the
bus station,
at 6 AM.



I'll be
there.

Me, too. After
a six-hour bath
tonight.

Me,
too.

Count
me in.



It's a dirty job.
You're all good men.
I doubt if the rest of
the Zone will ever
know just how
good.



Harold felt a sense of
drawing together,
a camaraderie, and he
fought against it,
suddenly afraid.

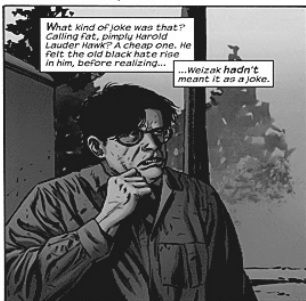
See you
tomorrow,
Hawk--

--said Weizak, one
of Harold's crewmates,
startling him.



What kind of joke was that?
Calling fat, pimply Harold
Lauder Hawk? A cheap one. He
felt the old black hate rise
in him, before realizing...

...Weizak hadn't
meant it as a joke.



The fact was, he *wasn't* fat anymore. And his pimples had cleared up weeks ago. And Weizak didn't know he had once been a school joke. Nor that his father had once asked Harold if he was homosexual.

A thought came to him, suddenly: *I could be an asset to this community.*



He pushed it away: *It doesn't matter. I've got the brains to pick the lock on the door they slammed in my face. And I believe I've found enough guts to open it once it's unlocked. And--*

Hey, man, you okay?



Me? Oh, I'm fine, Chad. I was just thinking.

Well, you go right along and do that. From what I hear, every time you do that, you coin money for this joint.



Could that be true? Did people really think of him as an idea man? New country, new Harold, except...

...except for Frannie.



See you tomorrow, Hawk!

Eight AM, I'll be there!



He walked the rest of the way home, his mind gnawing at a problem he thought he had solved long ago.

When he reached his house, there was a surprise waiting for him on his front step.

YES?

I'm
Nadine
Cross.



The woman who came in with Larry Underwood's party. His heart started beating faster.

Harold Lauder.
What...what can I
do for you, Miss
Cross?

You can call
me Nadine, for a
start. And you could
invite me inside
for supper.

He did, stumbling
over his words.

We're going
to be very
good friends,
Harold.

She cooked for him, then maneuvered
him into the living room. The blinds were
drawn; the room was private and dark.

Something was happening
between them, but Harold
couldn't decipher what... As if
in answer to his unasked question:

I want what you want. I
know what's in
your heart.

Harold's throat
went dry with guilt.

No one
knows
that.

What's in your
heart
is in your
ledger. I could read
it--you moved it to the
attic, for safekeeping--
but I don't
need to.

I know because
he told me all about
you. He...wrote me a
letter, you could
say.





I'll be your mother, or your sister, or your whore, or your slave, you just have to tell me what you want, Harold, and I'll do it...

But for a price. Isn't that right? Nothing is free...

What's the price? What does *he* want?



What we *both* want. What you *almost* did to Redman when you were hunting for the old woman...but on a much larger scale. And when that's done, we can go to him, Harold. And stay with him.



His lips felt cold, *ashy*.

What if I say no?

You'll spend your life wondering what it would be like to hear me talking dirty to you...or to have me spill honey all over your body and lick it off...

Stop it--

I think you'll *also* wonder what it would have been like on *his* side of the world. That more than any and everything else, maybe.



Decide, Harold.
Do I button my
shirt back up...or take
everything off?

How long did he think? He didn't know.

In a way, the fact that she loved the Dark Man but would
give so much of herself to him intensified his desire.

Insanely, he wanted to hear this woman call him "Hawk."



The bedroom.
Let's go in the
bedroom.



The words tasted like
death in his mouth...



...as Harold Lauder
succumbed to his
destiny.

TO BE CONTINUED!

STEPHEN KING
THE STAND



**CHARACTER
NOTEBOOK**



Name: Larry Underwood

Hometown: New York, NY

Bio: In the weeks leading up to the outbreak, Larry was enjoying a wave of success that he had never known, stemming from the popularity of his single, "Baby Can You Dig Your Man?" After weeks of non-stop partying, it finally took his best friend, Wayne Stukey, telling him that he was headed for a big fall, to get him out of the downward spiral of booze, drugs and women. Heeding his friend's advice to clear out of Los Angeles, Larry drove back to New York, to his mother's apartment in the Bronx... just in time for the plague to hit.

Larry saw some of the worst of it—the violent death of his mother, the collapse of city infrastructure, and the fragile and destroyed psyches that remained in the wake of Captain Trips. Being in New York, survivors were not as hard to find, and with one survivor in particular, Rita Blakemoor, Larry saw some hope. They lived together for a short time in the now-empty Plaza Hotel, and then, together, decided to leave the city and look for other survivors.

Unfortunately, their partnership was short-lived.

Just days after a hellish trip through the Lincoln Tunnel, the two of them were camping in New Jersey when Larry woke to find Rita dead from a drug overdose—"70% accident, 30% suicide." Larry entered a new level of despair and loneliness in the days that followed, traveling aimlessly, finally ending up on the Maine Coast. His loneliness was finally remedied by his coming across a woman traveling with a small boy—Nadine Cross and Joe. Joe was not Nadine's child, and the boy refused to speak. Larry found himself attracted to Nadine, but she demurred; the trio ended up in Ogunquit, Maine, seeing the message left on a barn roof by Harold Lauder, directing them to Stovington, VT., and then on to Mother Abigail's in Nebraska, and then, finally to Boulder.

Along the way, they pick up other survivors, including Judge Farris and a young woman named Lucy Swann, who Larry strikes up a relationship with. Upon arriving in Boulder, Larry finds himself tapped to join the Free Zone Committee, once again in a position of responsibility he never wanted.



Name: Harold Lauder

Hometown: Ogunquit, ME

Bio: Harold Lauder did not have it easy before the outbreak. An intelligent and pimply teenager, he was pegged as a nerd, presumed to be a homosexual by his father, and generally considered a social misfit—a consideration helped by his superior attitude and unpleasant demeanor. When everyone in his hometown dropped dead—with the exception of Fran Goldsmith—he found a new role for himself as Fran's protector. It was Harold who suggested they look for survivors in Stovington, VT.—though not before leaving a message painted in 6-foot-tall letters on the roof of a local barn, directing other survivors to follow them—and when they met Stuart Redman on their travels, Harold was vehemently opposed to their joining forces, at least, until Stu told Harold he had no designs on Fran.

After finding nothing but death and despair in Stovington and deciding to continue on to Nebraska, the group had a near-death experience on a highway in Pennsylvania when they came across a gang of well-armed men who had taken a harem of women survivors captive. After a furious firefight, Harold, Fran, Stu and Glen emerged

victorious, and their group began to grow as they all headed West.

Along the way, Harold finally got up the courage to make a move towards Fran, but he was rejected outright. A few days later, Harold found Fran's journal and read it to find some very unkind words towards him. This unhinged Harold, and for the first time, he becomes aware of a presence to the West, beyond Boulder—the Dark Man, beckoning Harold to him.

A new Harold emerges from this incident—one who avoids sweets, attempts to be friendly, and aspires to be a leader. But beneath this thin veneer, there boils a rage that no one is aware of. When he is passed over for membership on the Free Zone Committee, he becomes lost to the Dark Man and his intentions. And, eloquent as ever, he begins his own journal... a screed against the people of the Free Zone, and a declaration of his intentions to kill Stu Redman and Fran Goldsmith.



Name: Fran Goldsmith

Hometown: Ogunquit, Maine

Bio: Frances Goldsmith was already not having a great year when the virus swept the United States. She had just discovered that she had gotten pregnant by her college boyfriend, Jess, who reacted pretty immaturely to the whole thing. But Jess' response was nothing compared to the brutal treatment she received from her mother, Carla, who nearly disowned her. It was her father, Peter, who ended up being the understanding, loving parent. But it couldn't last for long—within days of telling her parents that she was pregnant, Project Blue had swept the country, and she found herself to be one of the only survivors...

But she was not alone. Another boy in town, Harold Lauder, also survived the plague. The two banded together, and set out for Stovington, VT, where there was a Centers for Disease Control facility that would surely have answers. Along the way, they met Stu Redman and Glen

Bateman, and the four band together. When they found that the Stovington Facility held no answers, they headed West, following dreams about a woman named Mother Abigail. They follow these dreams all the way to Boulder, CO. Along the way, Frannie and Stu have fallen in love—much to the chagrin of Harold. However, it was reading Frannie's journal that finally unhinged Harold.

Upon arriving in Boulder, Frannie finds herself named to the Boulder Free Zone Committee, but spends much of her time worrying about the future—especially about her baby. Because no one knows how the virus will affect babies who have no immunity...



Name: Stuart Redman

Hometown: Arnette, TX

Bio: Stu Redman was about as close to the source of the outbreak as any civilian. When Charlie Campion, a worker at Project Blue in California, crashed his Cadillac into Hapscomb's Texaco station just north of Arnette, TX, it triggered a worldwide domino effect that would wipe out 99% of the population in two weeks. Stu was a quick thinker even right then, in the beginning—he managed to shut off the gas pumps before the Cadillac caused the station to go up in a ball of fire.

Before long, Stu could tell that he had an immunity to the virus that few of his friends and neighbors had. When the Army moved in to take control of the situation in Arnette, Stu was carted off to the CDC in Atlanta with several other members of their town. When "Captain Trips" took over the CDC in Atlanta, Stu was moved by the Army to a secondary facility in Stovington, VT. It was difficult to discern exactly what was going

on in the world outside his prison cell, but when it became clear that the plague had gotten out of control, he was able to save his own life by killing his captors—who meant to kill him—and escape.

Shortly thereafter, he ran into Glen Bateman and then Fran Goldsmith and Harold Lauder. The four of them set out together back for the Stovington Facility, not believing Stu's declaration that there was nothing there. From there, they headed west to Nebraska and the beckoning dreams of Mother Abigail, and then on to Boulder, CO.

Stu and Fran are now deeply in love, and Stu's concern for Fran and her baby is second only to Fran's. Moreover, Stu has found himself as a kind of leader of the Boulder Free Zone, presiding over the Free Zone Committee, with only Mother Abigail above him.



Name: Nick Andros

Hometown: Caslin, NE

Location when the plague hit: Shoyo, AK

Bio: Nick Andros had learned how to navigate the world as a deaf-mute nomad, communicating by writing on a pad and lip-reading, taking the odd job here and there. But he had no way to defend himself when a gang of local, drunk good-old-boys outside of Shoyo, AK decided to beat him up for fun. In the aftermath, he befriended the Sherriff and his wife just in time to watch the entire town of Shoyo deteriorate in the grips of Captain Trips. Deputized in order to help maintain peace, Nick ended up losing an eye when one of his original attackers came looking for blood.

After a scare of infection, Nick recovered and followed his dreams to Mother Abigail's house. Along the way, he met Tom Cullen, a man-child who seems to suffer from retardation. The two become travel companions—Tom saving Nick's life when he senses an oncoming tornado—but Nick is almost convinced by Julie Lawry to leave Tom behind after she seduces him in a drug store. The two were almost shot when Julie attempted to kill them after Nick's rejection.

On their way to Nebraska, they collected almost a dozen survivors, and by the time they arrived at Mother Abigail's house, they were a sizeable party. After a few days, they set out—with Mother Abigail—for Boulder, CO. One of the de facto leaders of the Free Zone, Nick occupies an influential position on the Free Zone Committee, and enjoys the attention and trust of Mother Abigail. But can a 22-year-old deaf-mute really lead an entire society into a new era?



Name: Abigail Freemantle, a.k.a, Mother Abigail

Hometown: Hemmingford Home, NE

Bio: Abby Freemantle was 108 years old at the time of the Captain Trips outbreak. She is a spiritual person, and believes that she is being kept alive by God for a very specific purpose... a great battle will take place, and she knows that she will need to lead the charge on the side of good against the Dark Man, who is a servant of the Devil.

She had lived her entire life in Hemmingford Home, NE. She had married three times, had six boys, had 32 grandchildren, 91 great-grandchildren, and at the time of the outbreak, three great-great-grandchildren. She had out lived them all.

When the survivors arrived, she had prepared a hearty meal for them, even in her frail condition and with the limited supplies available to her. Then, they picked up stakes, and for the first time in

her century-plus-change life, she moved out of Hemmingford Home. Upon arriving in Boulder, she could sense that she would not be there for long.

Finally, one night, she was visited in a dream by a great wolf—one who expressed God's displeasure with her. Awakening in the night, she set out of Boulder on her own, leaving only a note: *I must be gone a bit now. I've sinned and presumed to know the Mind of God. My sin has been PRIDE, and He wants me to find my place in His work again. I will be with you again soon if it is God's will. But is it God's will for the survivors living in the Boulder Free Zone to be without a leader...?*



Name: Randall Flagg, a.k.a. the Walkin' Dude, a.k.a., the Dark Man

Hometown: Unknown

Bio: No one knows where Randall Flagg came from, but he seems to strike the same fear in everyone he comes across. Wearing a denim jacket and worn down cowboy boots, he just appeared along US Highway 51 in Idaho, walking towards Nevada. His memory of his past is murky—flashes of KKK lynchings and the Charles Manson family sit in the back of his mind—but he can't remember where he's been in the meantime. But he does know his purpose.

As the world tore itself apart in the grips of Captain Trips, Flagg began to assemble his minions, collecting Lloyd Henreid from a prison cell in

Phoenix, AZ, and summoning Trashcan Man from Indiana, gathering them all in Las Vegas, Nevada. There he began restoring the infrastructure of the city, getting the water and lights back on, but also, amassing a fantastic armory and grooming an army.

But beyond his dark intentions, he is imbued with certain powers—he can “see” beyond what normal humans see, and can take on the form of animals, especially wolves and ravens. And what other tricks he has stored away... no one can even imagine.

Name: Nadine Cross

Hometown: Pittsfield, Vermont

Bio: Nadine Cross has not led a normal life. Her parents died when she was quite young, and she was sent to live in the White Mountains of New Hampshire with her uncle. There, she began to feel the first inklings of a presence... and a purpose. She maintained her virginity through college and beyond, believing herself meant for someone. But it wasn't until a bizarre experience in college with a Ouija board that she first felt the touch of the Dark Man.

After the outbreak, Nadine came across a boy who refused to speak. She named him Joe, and together they traveled until they came upon Larry Underwood, whom Joe tried to kill with the butcher knife he carried with him everywhere. Responding only to Nadine's attempts to soothe him, Joe relented and the three of them became a group. However, believing herself to be destined for something else—someone else—she rebuffed Larry's advances.

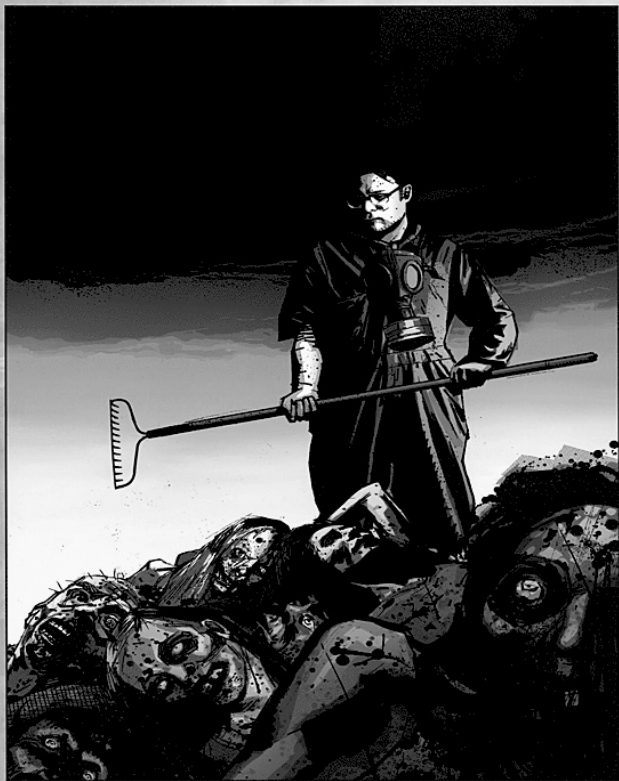
As they neared the Boulder Free Zone, however, Nadine became increasingly worried—everyone else in their party was having dreams of Mother Abigail in fields of corn. She dreamed only of the Dark Man. And the solace that might have come from allowing herself to be loved by Larry is drifting away, as Larry becomes involved with Lucy Swann.

Now, in Boulder, Nadine is increasingly outcast. The boy, Joe, found his voice with the help of Mother Abigail—and Mother Abigail could sense that there was something not right with Nadine. Now calling himself Leo Rockaway, Joe steers clear of Nadine, and Nadine finds herself truly alone.

Of course, nature abhors a vacuum...



Next: "You're a card, Hawk, you know that?"
"I am... A **wild card**..."



"Marvel's vision of *The Stand* remains one of the most faithful on the market...Aguirre-Sacasa and Perkins are firing on all cylinders."

-IGN.COM



After killing off 99% of the world's population, the superflu known as Captain Trips has left the survivors to pick up the pieces. But now that the dying are dead, those who remain have begun to separate into the light and dark. Those on the side of light have gone to Boulder, Colorado, where a peaceful society has been formed. Those on the side of dark have followed the beckoning of the Dark Man to Las Vegas, where he rules with a cruel hand. But not all of the citizens of Las Vegas are bad and not all of Boulder is good.

A showdown is coming, true believers, and in the space between light and dark there is a no man's land.

Based on the popular apocalyptic novel by celebrated author Stephen King, *The Stand* brings together critically acclaimed writer Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa (*Sensational Spider-Man*, *Angel: Revelations*, HBO's *Big Love*) and the gritty visuals of artist Mike Perkins (*Captain America*) to tell a tale that begins at the end of the world.

PARENTAL ADVISORY
FOR STRONG LANGUAGE & CONTENT

00111

59606 06582 0

WWW.MARVEL.COM

DIRECT EDITION

\$39.95

THE PROLETA



ARIA 7



YOU ARE THE TARGET MARKET